

A SKETCH OF THE CAREER
OF THE LATE
JAMES RICHARDSON LOGAN,
OF PENANG AND SINGAPORE.
BY
J. TURNBULL THOMSON.

In perusing the first number of your publication, I observe the high terms in which my friend the late JAMES RICHARDSON LOGAN is noticed by your Vice-President, the Ven'ble Archdeacon HOSE, M.A. This induces me to forward to you a few reminiscences of him, for, coming from one who knew him from boyhood, and who had the privilege of being his intimate friend for many years when residing in the Straits, what I have to relate, I venture to anticipate, will be of some interest to your readers.

He was the son of Mr. THOMAS LOGAN, of Berrywell, Berwickshire, Scotland, who had married his cousin, also a LOGAN, and to his mother my friend bore a strong resemblance. His superior intellectual faculties were also inherited from this source, hers being of a high order. His parents belonged to a family which, in their country, were and are eminent as agriculturists, but at the time I first knew him, Mr. THOMAS LOGAN had retired from business.

I met the subject of this notice as a boy when he was attending the Academy of Dunse, conducted by the late Mr. THOMAS MAULE. He was there what was called an extra scholar, sitting with others at a table in the centre of the school apart from the ordinary classical benches. At the table at which J. R. LOGAN sat, he and others were brought forward in the several branches of education by special teaching. From this Academy many men of note have emanated; amongst those that I can call to memory are the late Professor CUNNINGHAM of Edinburgh, Captain BAIRD SMITH of Bengal, and Dr. ROBERT HOGG of London.

J. R. LOGAN was some three years older than myself; hence, during the years 1830, 31 and 32, when we sat in the same school-room as boys, we arrived at no close intimacy. But the course of events brought us together in another part of the globe, by different routes and dissimilar adventure, it is true, yet the year 1839 found us as guests of the late amiable and kind-hearted proprietor of Glugor, Penang, and Longformacus, Berwickshire—the late DAVID WARDLAW BROWN, Esquire. Here a friendship and mutual confidence was established, that flagged not till death.

After leaving Dunse Academy, J. R. LOGAN proceeded to Edinburgh as pupil to a cousin of the same name, by profession an Advocate or Barrister. After fulfilling his time, he proceeded to Bengal, at the invitation of another cousin named DANIEL LOGAN, of whom he used always to speak with the highest regard, where he was engaged in indigo-planting for a short time, after which he accepted the invitation of his friend and schoolfellow, the late Mr. FORBES SCOTT BROWN, to join him at Penang. Here he soon found an opening in his profession by the departure for Europe, so in a Mr. BELHETCHER, Solicitor, who practised in the Penang
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But an obstacle in the way of his entering the Bar suddenly and unexpectedly presented itself in the shape of a most extraordinary freak on the part of the political rulers, who were at that time officials of the Hon'ble East India Company. The then Governor, Mr. BONHAM, and his coadjutors, taking advantage of the absence of the Judge, Sir WILLIAM NORRIS, abolished the Bar with three objects in view. First, retrenchment; secondly, an addition to their power; and thirdly, a saving of trouble to themselves. On these three grounds the young Advocate was refused admission. But so well was he supported, and so highly were his abilities appreciated by the inhabitants of the Settlement—European and Native—that the authorities had to give way, and thenceforward he became a Member of the Straits Bar.

In our frequent intercourse at Penang, I early observed his habits of close application and enquiry, the first instance of which was his sitting down beside a Kling shop at Sungei Kluang and obtaining from the owner, not only a list of all the various native products sold, but an account of their uses, places of growth.

prices, &c. In preparing himself also for the practice of English law (he having been trained in Scotland), I did not fail to notice with astonishment the intense continued application he gave to the contents of huge tomes, which, to me, were as "dry as dust" and as indigestible as sand.

During my residence at Penang, which continued for over three years—in 1838 to 1841—he was a frequent visitor to my solitary bungalow situated in the interior. His company was never more charming than on such occasions. Making but few friends in society, and being of a particularly retiring disposition, he seemed to reserve an overfull share of his attractions for those that could heartily sympathise with him in old fellowship. I remember particularly one occasion when I asked him to join me in an expedition to the interior of Sabrang Prye. Exploring the sources of the Junjong Idup, probably now covered with cultivation, but, at that time, under primitive forests, waste and unoccupied, except by the tiger or the *jakun*, we were detained for three days by a constant downpour and flooded rivers, having taken refuge in a deserted *pondoh*. Here his versatile talent came to our aid in wiling away the long, dark, dreary hours, whose melancholy and tediousness, was enhanced by the wail of the *unku*. I never heard Shakespeare read with greater effect, vigour, or thorough appreciation.

Even in those his very young years, I found him a safe counsellor and adviser in matters important to myself, where a false step might have been irretrievable. In my heart I was thankful to him for this. We met again at Singapore in 1843-4, where his elder brother ABRAHAM had joined me in my own house as *chum*. A falling off in practice at Penang made a change advisable for the younger LOGAN also, and with us he took up his residence.

For several years, the busy practice of his profession seemed to engage his whole attention, but early in 1847 I had an indication of coming events; not that there had not been abundant indications before this, for while he conducted the *Gazette* at Penang he drew out originality and latent talent from many of the residents—European and Asiatic—which that paper had never shown before, and he himself illuminated it with many powerful leaders.

The occasion of this direct indication occurred when he had preceded me to Malacca on law business. I had followed in the gun-

boat on survey duty. Here it was difficult to find quarters, so he carried me to Kampong Illier, where he had hired a bungalow. In the evening he invited me to accompany him to St. John's mount, where, he said, we should enjoy a most glorious sunset. While sitting on the old Dutch ramparts his first hint of a scientific journal was made to me, by his asking my co-operation—not that he seriously intended this, but as an indirect way of letting me know of a somewhat (as it would appear to me) ambitious project. At the time, I personally thought little more of it, but of his seriousness (if I had any doubts on the subject) he gave ample proof in his devotion of every spare moment to an examination of the geology of Malacca and its neighbourhood, exposing himself in this pursuit the live long day to the full rays of the tropical sun. Few men were gifted with such intense energy. Alas! the spirit was strong, but a delicate constitution denied to him the full exercise of his abilities.

The establishment of the "Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia" duly took place in 1847, as mentioned by Archdeacon HOSE, who remarks that it was a bold enterprise for a single individual to undertake. I may also add that, continued as it was for so many years, it was also a most public spirited one, for such a work was necessarily mainly supported at the private expense of the proprietor. And as the Archdeacon justly states, the continuance of the Journal evidenced a time of great scientific power and literary activity in the Straits. To LOGAN is the credit due not only of evoking this power, but of having personally contributed so largely by his papers to its scientific objects.

If my remembrance serves me aright, LOGAN, while influencing all that were willing to aid, himself engaged first in geological enquiry; next in geographical exploration; and then in philological studies: and, to my mind, it is on the latter that his reputation will mainly rest.

During these few recent years, I have given some of my attention to one of the branches coming under the scope of his studies, and in reading the disquisitions of HODGSON on Asia, BLACK on Africa, ANDREWS on Polynesia, with others, I find his elucidation of many remote and subtle points in the linguistic peculiarities of nations most respectfully quoted or referred to. Indeed, he is generally known as Dr. LOGAN—a title too often detained from those who

deserve it best. On this subject, it is now many years ago that I had the pleasure of the company of Sir WILLIAM MARTIN, Chief Justice of New Zealand, when I was surprised to learn of the familiar knowledge which that learned lawyer had of the minute Analysis by LOGAN of the Polynesian languages.

LOGAN, in first applying himself to the geology of the Malayan Peninsula, displayed great fortitude and contempt of danger, proceeding as he did in his excursions in a small *sampan* into coves and creeks notoriously infested with pirates. But even more so did he display these admirable qualities when penetrating the wilds of Johor, Pahang and Kedah. About this period he had removed to Sungei Kallang, near Singapore, while I, bound by my official duty, remained in town.

I remember, after he had been on one of those expeditions for several weeks, I was suddenly aroused late in the evening by what appeared to be his spectre. The next moment I saw him tottering, when I rushed forward and grasped my friend, leading him to a chair.

He had just returned from exploring the Indau, Johor, and Muar, crossing the jungles of the interior, and after many adventures amongst the wild tribes and escapes from flooded rivers, alligators, &c., he found means to return to Singapore. Weak, weary and sick, he made his way to my house, as the nearest one, likely to administer to his immediate wants. In this, I need not say there was no laxity.

In the latter years of our intercourse, I observed him to be principally devoted to philology. On this subject, his range of enquiry was as wide as it was persevering. I finally left the Far East in 1855, before he had entered into the midst of his labours in this direction; yet I had had fair opportunity of seeing his close application to the science of language. All languages were equally attacked by him—European, Asian, African, American, and Polynesian—in their glossarial, phonetic and idiomatic phases, and particularly the latter. The extent of the learning evidenced by his papers is surprising, even now after the lapse of a quarter of a century, if we consider that they were published before the present facilities were offered or at hand to the student, which are now so abundantly provided by the publication of the vocabularies and grammars of HODGSON, KOELLE, BLACK, CAMPBELL, and a host of others.

I may mention one incident which occurred at this period as exemplifying his devotion to his favourite pursuit. In the year 1849-50, I was surveying the Johor River, when I asked him to accompany me for change of air. I had at my service a small gunboat not over well provided with *kadjangs*. Anchoring in the evening, I turned in after the fatigues of the day and fell asleep, but was awoken at midnight by a sudden turmoil. This proved to be a *Sumatra*, bringing with it the usual squalls and rain. On looking for my friend, I found him perched on the top of the powder canister to save himself from the wet, close by a lamp at which he was, and had been all night, closely analysing the construction of the Dutch language. Such enthusiasm surely deserved unalloyed success and the applause of mankind. But the inscrutable ways of Providence brought not about the reward that his friends would have entirely desired, or which would have been entirely gratifying, to them. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* LOGAN is variously and at different times mentioned along with MARSDEN, LEYDEN, RAFFLES, and CRAWFORD. For my part, I would class him alone with LEYDEN. But in doing so, even here there is considerable qualification. Both were borderers, both men of intense energy and great powers of application. With all this LEYDEN was a poet, a poet above mediocrity. I am not aware that LOGAN ever wrote a verse. It is in the science of language that LEYDEN and LOGAN are akin in genius, but LEYDEN's sphere was translation, LOGAN's analysis and comparison. LEYDEN was an antiquarian, LOGAN an explorer of things as they are, a far more difficult and deeper subject than the former, requiring great and comprehensive knowledge, a highly matured judgment, and close acuteness of critical powers.

Fate was adverse to both; neither brought their labours to full consummation. Under happier circumstances, both would have illuminated the world with best stores of yet dormant mysteries, wherein the complex skein of human races on this earth would have been disentangled and brought within our ken. While I mention LEYDEN and LOGAN as being men of much the same genius and power, it would be neglectful not to denote their differences. LEYDEN was born of the humbler classes, LOGAN of the middle. This is only interesting in so far as it points a moral and illustrates life's antithesis. In India, JOHN LEYDEN, the shepherd's son, was the pri-

vileged companion and favoured protégé of the most illustrious men in power, by whose interest and support he had unstinted facilities given him in his special and peculiar pursuits. LOGAN, the son of a gentleman, had none of this. What he attained was due solely to his own labour and indomitable perserverance; these being exercised at the same time under the distracting influences of a laborious profession by which he honourably maintained himself.

Under these circumstances, probably LEYDEN would have accomplished more; indeed he must have done so, but an early death overtook him, as we all know, caused by exposure to the malaria of Batavia.

What LEYDEN accomplished, therefore, was small as compared with LOGAN. In the science of races and languages, LOGAN's grasp was almost universal, enabling him to collate the lexicons, vocabularies and grammars of nations and tribes in the most distant parts of the globe, and elucidate their systems and constructions. Of this vast enquiry, LEYDEN may be said to have had time only to approach the portal.

But, as I have suggested before, LOGAN's work was also incomplete. Ten years of learned leisure in his native country would have enabled him to work wonders. But this was not vouchsafed to him. Borne down by weak health, far from his native land, he was taken from us at the age when man's intellect is in its full vigour. And we live to lament unfulfilled hopes, disappointed aspirations, and useful labour ceased, to be no more.

INVERCARGILL, NEW ZEALAND,
20th May, 1881.

